

U of A awarded lion's share of Canada Excellence Research Chairs

Michael Brown

The University of Alberta has been awarded four of the 19 Canada Excellence Research Chairs created by the federal government to attract and retain the world's top minds in establishing ambitious research programs in universities across Canada.

In a May 17 announcement, the U of A revealed that Michael Houghton, Canada Excellence Research Chair in Virology; Graham Pearson, CERC in Arctic Resources; Patrik Rorsman, CERC in Diabetes; and Thomas Thundat, CERC in Oil Sands Molecular Engineering, will each receive \$10 million over seven years to establish their programs at the U of A.

"As an institution we are indeed well positioned to deliver on the promise of these prestigious chairs, and I promise we will," said President Indira Samarasekera. "This is a tremendous validation of the research excellence already in place here, not only in oilsands engineering, virology, arctic resources and diabetes, but also in many supportive disciplines. That we have been able to attract four truly exceptional individuals to the U of A through the CERC competition is also a testament to the quality of our current faculty, students and outstanding nature of the research that we have undertaken to date."

"Even with an offer of major resources on the table, in my experience, top people will only consider moving if they know they'll be working with exceptional colleagues."

In 2008, the Government of Canada created a program to establish prestigious research chairs—Canada Excellence Research Chairs—in universities across the country to attract and retain the world's most accomplished researchers to build expertise in the priority research areas of environmental sciences and technologies, natural resources and energy, health and related life sciences and technologies, and information and communication technologies.

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Education springs eternal



Apple blossoms by the back of the Education Building help usher in spring.

Michael Holly / Creative Services

Generic drug may be potential treatment for deadly brain cancer

Noreen Remtulla & Julia Necheff

Medical researchers at the University of Alberta have shown that a cheap and relatively non-toxic generic drug might be a potential treatment for one of the deadliest of all human cancers: a form of brain cancer called glioblastoma.

A multidisciplinary research team led by Evangelos Michelakis and Kenn Petruk, both professors of medicine in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, has published evidence that the compound dichloroacetate, or DCA, affects the growth of glioblastoma tumours in humans. The findings were published in the May 12 edition of *Science Translational Medicine*, a journal of the American Association of the Advancement of Science.

"This work is one of the first studies in humans to support the emerging idea of altering the metabolism of tumours as a new direction in the treatment of cancer."

Evangelos Michelakis

Because there is currently no effective treatment for this type of cancer, the results are highly encouraging. "This work is one of the first studies in humans to support the emerging idea of altering the metabolism of tumours as a new direction in the treatment of cancer," Michelakis said.

DCA is an inexpensive drug that

contains dichloroacetic acid, a very small, simple molecule that resembles vinegar. It is mostly used to treat children with a rare metabolic disorder. In 2007, Michelakis and his team published evidence that DCA reverses cancer growth in non-human models. The drug tricks cancer cells into normal energy production by changing the way they handle nutrient fuels. This causes the cancer cells to "commit suicide," without harming healthy cells.

Many researchers around the world have confirmed the University of Alberta team's 2007 findings.

Often research that is promising in non-human models does not work outside the lab. However, the U of A team is now reporting success in the next phase of its DCA research, testing the compound in humans.


After extracting glioblastomas



Evangelos Michelakis (pictured) and Kenn Petruk may have found a treatment for certain brain tumours.

from 49 patients over a two-year period, and studying them within minutes of removal in the operating room, the team verified that the tumours responded to DCA.


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Ag prof named new dean of students

Michael Brown

The University of Alberta has appointed Frank Robinson as vice-provost and dean of students for a five-year term of office, effective July 1.

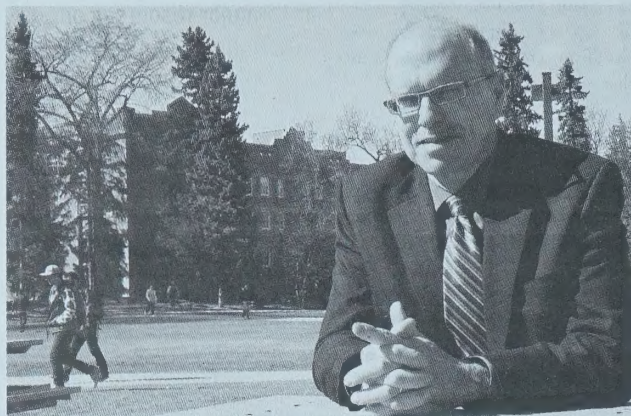
"Frank is dedicated to improving the campus environment for students and continually works to support or positively impact student life, the individual student experience and students' academic success," said Carl Amrhein, provost and vice-president (academic). "Frank understands the connection between the importance of the university's sense of spirit, which supports student initiatives and opportunities, and the importance of the individual student's willingness to engage deeply in university life, to their maximum benefit."

"He accords students a respect, openness and commitment that have gained him their respect, trust and willingness to work collaboratively toward realistic solutions."

Before joining the U of A as a poultry-science professor in 1986, Robinson received a bachelor of science degree from the University of Saskatchewan, a master's of science from Virginia Tech and a PhD from the University of Guelph.

Robinson's research and teaching interests stemmed from what he says were an excellent team of mentors at the U of S that "turned a lot of people onto poultry." His research program focused on reproductive fitness of meat-type chickens and turkeys. More specifically, Robinson had an interest in determining the ideal target body weight for broiler breeder hens, as measured by such reproductive efficiency indicators as egg production, fertility and hatchability.

With his PhD fresh in hand, Robinson came to the U of A's Depart-



Frank Robinson is the new dean of students.

ment of Animal Science to lead the redevelopment of the Alberta Poultry Research Centre, which is the largest of its kind in Canada and ranks along with the top U.S. centres of its kind. He was inducted into the Alberta Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2006 for his contributions.

While Robinson is a real U of A research success story, his passion also lies in teaching. A champion of inquiry-based learning, Robinson has turned Animal Science 200's "There's a Heifer in Your Tank" program into a destination for first-year students of all backgrounds. The course is a research project that tackles some of the more unusual agriculture-related notions and

then is turned into a travelling video and musical presentation. In 2007, Robinson received the 3M National Fellowship for teaching excellence, Canada's highest honour for undergraduate teaching.

"I hope I'm always going to be able to teach," said Robinson. "I don't want to lose contact with the student body, and as a teacher I feel that I have more in common with the average professor on campus."

With his keen understanding of students and their needs, it was only a matter of time before administration beckoned Robinson.

In 2002, then-chair of the Department of Agricultural Food and Nutritional Science, John Kennelly, recruited Robinson to be the department's associate chair (academic). In 2005, when Kennelly became dean of the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences, Robinson was recruited to be an associate dean (academic).

"It was in these roles that I really began to understand the inner workings of programs," said Robinson. "I realized I liked the student contact that came with administration. I was able to identify the rate-limiting factors in

a student's success and, if the problems were fixable, as an administrator, I was in a better position to fix them."

In 2008, when then-dean of students Bill Connor's term ended, Robinson was asked to take over the role in an interim capacity. It wasn't long before Robinson began to feel a major drive to continue to improve the university environment for students.

"Right away, I became acutely aware that being an advocate for students at the level of the provost's office was something that was valuable," said Robinson. "One of the areas I worked on was to become the university contact point for students, thus building bridges for communication."

In his 22 months as interim dean, Robinson says that, other than the continual student interactions, he counts as his favourite accomplishments the student body's successful push for a new Physical Activity and Wellness Centre, working to enhance student engagement and overseeing the beginning of a revolution in campus spirit.

"When we held the world's largest dodgeball game in February, that was my favourite day on campus in 23 years," said Robinson. "I really want to make this a campus where people feel a sense of commitment, that we're not just a place where you go to get a degree. The university really has a sense of spirit to it that we impart to people."

Whether it is the students, alumni, faculty and staff or administration, Robinson assures all that the school's spirit that has been percolating for more than 100 years is alive and well.

"When times get tough, this administration still takes the time to get excited about doing positive things," said Robinson. "The same can be said for our student leaders. When times are tough, they're still excited about working on whatever we can do to improve the campus environment." ■

"I really want to make this a campus where people feel a sense of commitment, that we're not just a place where you go to get a degree."

Frank Robinson

New VP takes the helm of external relations

Michael Brown

The University of Alberta has named Debra Pozega Osburn as vice-president (external relations), effective July 1.

"Debra is a recognized expert on post-secondary external relations issues and is particularly known for her expertise in integrated communications and outreach," said U of A President Indira Samarasekera. "Debra's strategic approach is an important one as the university reaches out to share our story with Edmonton, Alberta and the world."

As vice-president, Pozega Osburn will be part of the executive team that provides leadership, strategic planning and oversight to the university, with a focus on activities that maintain and enhance reputation, accrue resources and build relationships critical to the institution's success.

Pozega Osburn's career in public relations began on the other side of the communications ledger in 1979 at the *Lansing State Journal* after graduating from Michigan State University with a degree in journalism. A varsity track athlete surrounded by the likes of famed Los Angeles Laker Magic Johnson and baseball great Kirk Gibson, it is little wonder Pozega Osburn spent the majority of a 13-year journalism career

as a sports reporter. "I still think being a sports reporter was one of the best jobs I ever had," she says.

Despite the rigours of covering a sports beat, Pozega Osburn was able to complete a master's degree in American studies from Michigan State. It was then that the Great Lakes State native began to take a hard look at her future career path, when she accepted a position with her alma mater to head up its media relations programs.

"I hadn't thought of going into that type of work but I thought, 'Given my affinity for post-secondary education and my knowledge of Michigan State, this probably would be a very good fit for me,' and in fact it was," said Pozega Osburn.

Over the next decade, in addition to her work as an administrator, Pozega Osburn was able to complete a PhD in American studies and assume a number of faculty positions at the school.

Looking to expand her world once again, Pozega Osburn left Michigan State and became a partner and executive vice-president at Lezotte Miller Osburn Public Relations, where she served as a consultant to various corporations, post-secondary institutions, associations and non-profit agencies, focusing on strategic stakeholder engagement, media relations and constituent relations.

"I'd have to say, we had a ball," she said. "Then I heard about all the great things at the U of A."

Pozega Osburn joined the university in 2007 as an associate vice-president of external relations, brought aboard to assist then-vice-president Sandra Conn by leading strategic outreach initiatives for new ventures such as the Edmonton Clinic, the School of Energy and the Environment, and the Canada School of Energy and the Environment. Since July of last year, she has worked in the role of interim vice-president (external relations) to lead a team of some 160 external relations professionals to establish and achieve institutional goals, which includes a big push to enhance the university's image and reputation beyond Alberta.

"A lot of folks ask me about the decision to come to the U of A and join this great team, and I say one of the defining factors would have to be the high-level immersion in academic excellence across the board," said Pozega Osburn. "That told me something about what makes the U of A different from a lot of other institutions."

Pozega Osburn says her overarching goal is to galvanize the talent across external relations and help the university continue its trajectory towards global excellence. "Maybe we won't be growing in sheer size as fast as we were



Debra Pozega Osburn

previously, but I think we are going to continue to grow in our capacity for excellence," she said. "Whether that is helping these students who come to us become the leaders of the future, or whether it is related to our founding promise of uplifting the whole people, I think external relations is critical."

As for her personal successes going forward, Pozega Osburn says she wants to continue to do what she has always done, no matter what her role is.

"Wherever I was able to work, I always felt I have been able to be a strong contributor to that institution and have been able to help the people I have worked with take the next step in their successes," she said. ■

CERC *continued from page 1*

Initially, 41 Canadian universities competed for the opportunity to establish CERCs at their institution. In April of 2009, the federal government short listed 40 proposals from 17 universities, of which five came from the U of A. All told, the U of A received the lion's share of CERCs with four chairs, twice as many as the next closest CERC recipient.

"The Canada Excellence Research Chairs program is helping our universities here in Alberta and across Canada attract and develop top scientists whose cutting-edge research will ensure that our country remains a world leader in innovation, productivity and quality of life," said Rona Ambrose, minister of public works and government services, minister for status of women, and minister responsible for Northern Alberta.

Houghton will join the freshly minted Li Ka Shing Institute of Virology, which was established just last month through a gift of \$28 million from the Li Ka Shing (Canada) Foundation and a \$52.2 million investment by the Government of Alberta. He is an internationally recognized expert in hepatitis, and was part of the team that discovered the hepatitis C virus in the

1980s. Houghton, who starts his term on June 1, will work with colleagues to develop a vaccine for hepatitis C, develop new treatments for patients already infected and study new viruses that cause disease.

"I'm very pleased to be at the University of Alberta because they have excellent experimental and clinical researchers in the diseases that I'm very interested in, for example viral hepatitis and inflammatory bowel disease."

Pearson, who begins his term Oct. 1, will develop the first detailed picture of rock formations hidden deep under the Earth's crust in Canada's Arctic, revealing new data on the land masses where diamonds are formed. In addition, his micro-sampling technique for diamond analysis will be the first of its kind in Canada. Able to determine the chemical "fingerprint" of Canadian diamonds, this technique will protect their ethical and geographical purity, and guarantee their premium on the international market, which holds the promise of economic benefit to the North.

"This particular project has offered me the opportunity to study the rock formations beneath the Canadian Arctic, a very difficult area to get at, and really solve a problem that is only

"Even with an offer of major resources on the table, in my experience, top people will only consider moving if they know they'll be working with exceptional colleagues."

Indira Samarasekera

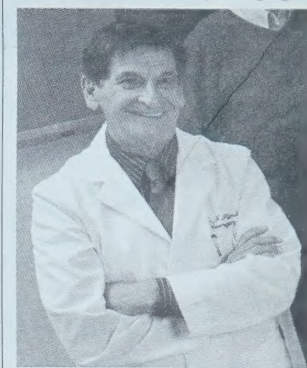
tractable by the magnitude of funding that the Canadian government has made available," said Pearson. "It really would not be possible to do this type of research without this sort of funding, and it would not be possible in any other government environment."

Rorsman, whose term begins March 1, 2011, joins the acclaimed Alberta Diabetes Institute, home to the team that developed the world-renowned Edmonton Protocol islet transplant diabetes treatment. He studies how human pancreatic islets function during both health and disease. He will develop new treatments that preserve, regenerate and transplant these insulin-producing cells

back to healthy conditions, thereby restoring the pancreatic function. Close to three million Canadians suffer from Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes.

"The University of Alberta, and in my case the Diabetes Institute, is a great trademark, a great brand," said Rorsman. "The Edmonton Protocol is well known all over the world for the pioneering work that has been carried out here over the last 15 to 20 years. It is a fantastic opportunity to be invited to be part of such a vibrant and dynamic research community."

Thundat, who begins his term Aug. 1, is a world leader in the study of molecules and nanoscale structures at interfaces, such as liquids and gases. He brings a strong track record of commercialization to an outstanding team of oilsands researchers at the U of A. He will develop new detection and extraction technologies to improve the overall efficiency of how Canada's oilsands are processed. The tools he develops will help with basic understanding of oilsands interface and eventually lead to extraction processes that are more energy-efficient, use less water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Thundat will be a member of the Faculty of Engineering. ■

Generic drug *continued from page 1*

Kenn Petruk

The researchers then treated five patients with advanced glioblastoma. They obtained tumour tissues before and after DCA therapy. After comparing the two samples, they confirmed DCA worked in the same manner as they had predicted in their earlier test-tube experiments. The unique attribute of DCA is that it alters the metabolism of glioblastoma stem cells, the cells thought to be responsible for the recurrence of cancer.

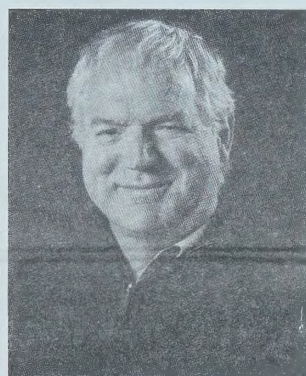
There were no significant adverse effects. Higher levels of the drug caused some nerve malfunction, such as numbing of the fingers and toes.

The U of A medical research team also found that DCA therapy was most effective when combined with chemotherapy.

What also makes this work significant is the fact it has been largely funded by public generosity. Typically, the pharmaceutical sector funds clinical trials, which are very expensive. However, rights to the DCA compound are not owned by any pharmaceutical company. Michelakis and his team are working to secure more funding to continue their ongoing DCA clinical trials.

The next phase of their research will include a larger number of brain-cancer patients and patients from other academic health science centres. The researchers plan to test DCA in combination with standard chemotherapies. They also wish to expand their research to include breast- and lung-cancer patients.

The U of A research team stresses the limitations of drawing conclusions from five patients. "More clinical trials must be done with DCA," said Michelakis and that use of DCA as a cancer therapy without close clinical observation by experienced medical teams in monitored research trials is not only inappropriate, but also dangerous. ■



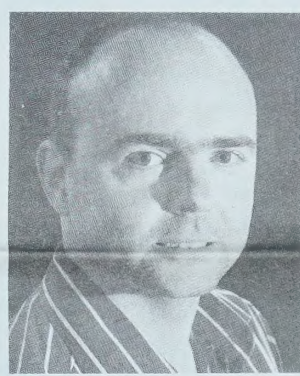
Michael Houghton



Patrik Rorsman



Thomas Thundat



Graham Pearson

Augustana workshop dedicated to legendary handyman

Christopher Thrall

In the decades before Augustana joined the University of Alberta, Hank VanDruten was called upon to maintain an aging infrastructure using only his know how and a little elbow grease.

To mark his years of service and dedication, VanDruten, Augustana's maintenance manager for 25 years, returned to the Camrose campus for a show of appreciation last month.

VanDruten began his stay at the Augustana at the age of 56 when many

people start thinking about retiring. Innovating at every turn and making do with less, VanDruten tenure lasted until 2002 when he was forced to retire prematurely.

With the new Facilities & Operations building open on the southern edge of campus, the team that worked with VanDruten wanted to recognize his devotion to Augustana. Unable to name the building after him, it was decided that the machine shop be named in his honour.

In between stories about the storied handyman's ingenious fixes, includ-

ing the redesigned and rebuilt heating system in the Convocation Centre, Chris Blades, facilities and operations manager at Augustana and former protégé of VanDruten, presented his mentor and friend with the welding helmet VanDruten wore throughout his time at Augustana and unveiled a plaque that reads:

To honour Hank's 25 years of mentorship and innovation to Augustana Campus, we dedicate this plaque. He inspired us all to carry on his

legacy of hard work and commitment in maintaining and improving our facilities.

"There were some difficult times," said VanDruten, whose last days at Augustana came long before the campus joined the U of A. "At times, there was no money and we all just pitched in for the students. After all, that was the most important thing—they were here to make a future, so we all helped out." ■



Hank VanDruten

Are You a Winner?

Congratulations to Patricia Garth, whose name was drawn as part of folio's May 7 "Are You a Winner?" contest, after she correctly identified the photo in question day-care castle is on the east side of HUB Mall, right next to parking Lots U and N. For her effort, Garth has won a handsome U of A pageholder.

Up for grabs this week is a copy of "Emblems of Empire: Selections from the Mactaggart Art Collection," courtesy of the U of A Press. To get your hands on this sumptuous volume, simply identify where on campus the object of the picture is located. Email your correct answer to folio@exr.ualberta.ca by noon on Friday, May 28, and you will be entered into the draw. ■



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The terrazzo floors in the Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Science get some use.

U of A pays homage to the laser

Brian Murphy

The laser beam, once just an idea in the fertile mind of Albert Einstein, has now been in use for 50 years. This week the University of Alberta held a birthday party and celebrated its own contributions to laser technologies.

On hand for the U of A celebrations was professor emeritus Allan Offenberger, who came to the university in 1968 with a goal as straight as a beam of light: laser research. "We were looking at lasers for medical

and industrial applications and I was doing research into lasers for use in fusion energy," remembered Offenberger.

The quest for laser technology to generate fusion energy—the same process that powers our sun—has resulted in a long-time collaboration between the U of A and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California. "Fusion is hydrogen nuclei fusing to create new states of matter and in the course of that transformation you get energy release," said Offenberger. "A laser would provide the heat necessary to trigger the process."

One of the applications for laser-generated fusion would be the generation of electric power. It will be at least another 20 years before researchers can prove that the principle works, but Offenberger says it's worth the effort. "If we have fusion on Earth, we will never lack

"You can hardly find a car these days that wasn't cut and welded by the technology that I developed."

John Tulip

for energy again; it will be sustainable and available to everyone."

John Tulip, who joined the U of A's electrical and computer engineering faculty the same year as Offenberger, says the field of laser research was wide open when he started. "It was a candy shop of opportunity and I chose high-powered lasers," said Tulip. From that interest evolved technology that's a cornerstone of laser manufacturing. "You can hardly find a car these days that wasn't cut and welded by the technology that I developed," said Tulip. He also held that patent on that research.

Tulip's laser research through the U of A and personal business ventures includes a laser targeting technology being used by Canadian soldiers operating leopard tanks in Afghanistan, environmental monitoring sensors and medical equipment. "For 20 years now we've been working on lasers for the treatment of prostate cancer," said Tulip. "The latest news on that technology is that it's going into clinical trials."

Tulip says students today are taking 50 years worth of research into how to produce laser light and moving forward by finding exciting new ways to use it.

"It's like déjà vu," says Tulip. "I saw this happen in the '60s when I started and even today I see all kinds of fledgling opportunities to improve every aspect of life you can think of."

the open door CERC success pushes U of A to frontlines of global research

Indira Samarasekera
President and vice-provost

This week, the University of Alberta decisively showed that we are a leader among Canadian universities and a destination of choice for world-class researchers. When the federal government announced the appointment of 19 Canada Excellence Research Chairs on Monday, May 17, our university clearly distinguished itself as the recipient of four of the 19 CERC awards—double that of any other university in the country.

The successful results of the inaugural Canada Excellence Research Chairs competition are a clear signal that the U of A and Canada are rapidly moving to the forefront of the global research community. We have recognized strengths and proven potential to make scientific breakthroughs, technological innovations and policy developments that the world needs to solve its most pressing challenges. If we are to fully realize that potential, bold decisions and investments are required. The CERC program is that kind of bold investment.

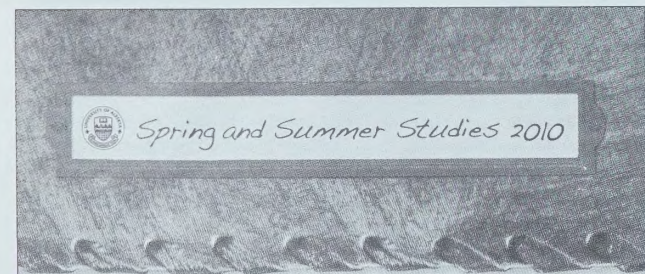
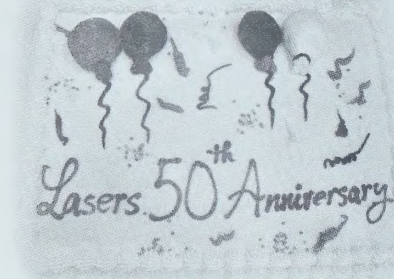
Government investment in a new visionary program, however, is only the first step. The second step is the critical one for individual institutions. Each university has to step up to the challenge and make the strongest submissions possible. When the opportunity arose to submit to the new CERC program, the U of A was ready. We made proposals in areas of strength and provided compelling evidence of our capacity to do research with a proven record of discovery,

innovation, commercialization and societal impact. We recruited ambitiously with the aim of being well positioned to deliver on the promise of these prestigious chairs.

That we have been able to attract four truly exceptional individuals to the U of A through the CERC competition is testament to the excellent quality of our current faculty, staff, students and facilities, and our growing international reputation across the full range of disciplines. Even with the offer of major resources on the table, in my experience, top people will only consider moving if they know they will be working with exceptional colleagues. Our success is also due to the efforts made in the faculties of medicine & dentistry, engineering and science to compile outstanding applications and identify and secure top candidates.

I encourage all members of the U of A community to visit our website where you will find print and video profiles of each of four new colleagues: Michael Houghton, Canada Excellence Research Chair in Virology; Graham Pearson, CERC in Arctic Resources; Patrick Rorsman, CERC in Diabetes; and Thomas Thundat, CERC in Oil Sands Molecular Engineering.

Winning four of 19 CERC appointments is an outcome that, in my view, stems from our collective dedication to the vision and goals laid out in *Dare to Discover* and *Dare to Deliver* over the last five years. Where once we dared to be a leading, world-class university, we are now delivering. Even in very difficult financial times, the U of A is building a very exciting future.



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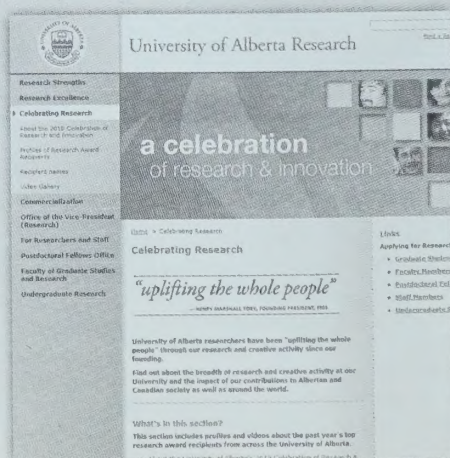
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Browse the video library to learn more about some of the U of A's stellar researchers, or search through specific categories, such as health, social sciences, science and technology or arts and humanities.



Laser tech beams about time at the U of A

Ryan Heise & Michael Brown

For those whose formative years were influenced by the likes of Star Wars, Star Trek and Battlestar Gallactica, the early '80s came to represent a laser crossroads where the possibilities associated with harnessing light began to jump from the pages of sci-fi comic books and into the labs of scientists around the world.

Caught with a finger in each realm was Blair Harwood, the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering's long-time research technician.

"As you can imagine, 27 years ago lasers had the 'cool' factor," said Harwood, who built his first laser—the equivalent of today's laser pointer—in 1979 from a mail-order kit. "At a time when most of my classmates—or at least most of those who could find jobs—were landing jobs fixing computers, landing a job with lasers was a dream job."

In 1983, that dream came true when Harwood, who was just 19, was hired at the U of A as a research tech after completing a two-year diploma at NAIT.

Since that time, he has advanced through the ranks while primarily working in laser and optics research labs. He eventually became the supervising technician for the department,

co-ordinating all of its undergraduate labs.

"The U of A is a great employer, but it is the actual job, the research, the challenge of figuring out how to do something that may not have ever been done before, that is the best part of working here," said Harwood, who was recently awarded with the 2010 Nat Rutter Outstanding Technician of the Year award. The award is presented by the U of A chapter of Sigma Xi, a non-profit organization that promotes excellence in scientific investigation and recognizes quality of work, innovation and dedication. "In my work, I support graduate students and their research, which is quite rewarding."

"It's nice to sit down with a grad student and explain how something is done or explain how to troubleshoot problems and see their appreciation when they solve a problem."

Blair Harwood

staff spotlight

"It's nice to sit down with a grad student and explain how something is done or explain how to troubleshoot problems and see their appreciation when they solve a problem. I enjoy that."

For Harwood, the timing of the award holds some significance: this year marks the 50th anniversary of the laser. To celebrate, the long-time research tech has put together a display to honour the technology he has devoted his professional life to. The display was included in Laserfest, an homage to the laser put on by the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, designed to teach high-school physics students about the historical significance of the laser.

Do to health reasons Harwood has recently scaled back his role, and is now supporting research in the laser and optics labs and acting as the department's safety officer. But going above and beyond has been a common theme throughout Harwood's career.

"He has a long history with the department, and I wish we had more like him," said department chair Horacio Marquez, who nominated Harwood for the award. ■



Blair Harwood is the 2010 Nat Rutter Outstanding Technician of the Year.

University welcomes SWAAC conference

Michael Brown

On April 30, the University of Alberta greeted 150 academic administrators from across Canada, as Edmonton played host to the 2010 Senior Women Academic Administrators of Canada conference for the first time.

"Dare to Share: Transcending Boundaries in Leadership," was the theme for the two-day event, which focused on women taking a collaborative approach to their leadership roles in Canada's increasingly complex post-secondary environment.

"It is wonderful that a group of motivated, innovative and effective female leaders can come together for a weekend and leave with a deepened understanding of transformative leadership and appreciation of each other," said Katy Campbell, conference chair and dean of the Faculty of Extension.

President Indira Samarasekera's opening address set the tone for the conference with a challenge to the participants.

"We are living in a time where universities are undergoing perhaps the most profound transformation in their entire history," said Samarasekera. "Are we doing enough to cultivate, nurture and build leadership in academics, and what do we need to do in order to build the next generation of leaders?"

Senior Women Academic Administrators was founded in 1987 to provide a forum and a collective voice for women in senior administrative ranks in Canadian universities, colleges and technical institutes. The primary purpose of the organization is the promotion of female leadership through

developing and enhancing leadership skills, mentoring future leaders, recognizing exceptional leaders and networking and communicating.

The conference addressed issues of concern to women in academic administration, provided a forum for knowledge mobilization related to relevant research, offered mentoring opportunities for future leaders and recognized exceptional leaders.

Keynote addresses from U of A Senator Claudette Tardif, former dean and vice-president (external relations), and Anne McLellan, former deputy prime minister of Canada, talked about their personal career advancement, the power of collaborative approach in leadership roles and the role of women in the academia.

A media relations panel made up of, among others, Linda Hughes, chancellor, and Debra Pozega Osburn,

vice-president (external relations), highlighted the importance of understanding the needs of journalists and using media as an appropriate tool to further the goals and vision of the organization.

The conference ended with the SWAAC Graduate Award of Merit Gala where leadership was celebrated through graduate student research awards and faculty career awards. Engineering grad student Kathleen Krause was among the four graduate students from universities across western Canada to win a Graduate Student Award of Merit from the membership. Olive Yonge, vice-provost, won the 2010 Inaugural Recognition Award for her contributions at an institutional, community and system level.

"I know I am in a leadership position but that is no guarantee I am a

leader," said Yonge, who intends to donate the \$1,000 prize to the Olive Yonge Graduate Student in Teaching and Learning Scholarship. "To have your colleagues and the selection committee look at your CV and the letters and then to have them decide that this is leadership is gratifying."

"However, I firmly believe that being a leader is never a solo journey—it is all about the community. In this case, I am just the first to be recognized." ■

"I firmly believe that being a leader is never a solo journey—it is all about the community."

Olive Yonge

How to train your commercialization dragon

Gloria Jensen

In 2009, U of A researchers submitted 92 Reports of Invention to TEC Edmonton. The reports are the first step toward discovering if there is intellectual property and, if so, commercializing it—giving back to society, generating more resources for further research and diversifying the economy by creating and growing businesses.

As the technology transfer agent for the U of A, TEC Edmonton helps researchers with commercialization at every stage, from idea generation, grant application, intellectual property evaluation and protection to licensing and spinoff creation. TEC Edmonton's team has years of experience in moving



technology to the marketplace. With this expertise comes lessons learned, and here are the "TEC Tips:"

- Talk to TEC Edmonton before you publish. Even publishing an abstract or presentation at a conference can ruin your opportunity to protect your intellectual property. "Even if you are considering an idea, it's never too early to talk to us," said Joanna

Preston, TEC transfer manager for health sciences.

- Patent databases are a good source for state-of-the-art research results and information about advances in industry. Just reading journals or papers on academic research will not necessarily give you the full picture on what research has been done and what the trends are. "Patent databases are free and a good way to find potential partners for industry sponsored research," Preston said.

- Remember that developing a commercial product can take longer than you expect. Even after a major breakthrough in research, it takes time and some applied research before there is a market pull. "Not all opportunities are equal," said Darrell

Petras, TEC transfer manager for physical and environmental sciences. "One software invention might take a year to get into the market and another might take five. Every technology has its own story."

- Seek legal help from TEC Edmonton when making agreements with third parties. When entering into collaborative research, intellectual property can be protected through a simple agreement, either a materials agreement or a confidential disclosure agreement. "Through proper negotiation of agreements, your IP portfolio can be properly protected preserving your publication and IP rights," Petras said.

- Make sure your research team is aware of any prior obligations. You are required to tell your research

team about any companies you may have partnered with and what your agreements entail. Legal issues around ownership come up when team members are not aware of other claims that a company might have on the research. "When legal issues arise, a company won't move forward with commercializing a technology until those issues are resolved," said Jayant Kumar, TEC transfer director. "This can postpone or terminate commercialization."

There is a lot to consider when planning to commercialize. However, TEC Edmonton will do everything possible to help researchers with their entrepreneurial efforts.

"The researcher fills the technology gap and TEC fills the business gap," Kumar said. ■

Leadership project provides links to local kids

Bev Betkowski

“We’ve got two sets of instructions ... I’m not sure which is right!”

“Hmm. What screwdriver do I use?”

With party tunes blasting in the background, the air of Lister Centre was thick with confusion, laughter and intense teamwork May 6 as University of Alberta employees got down to the tough business of building kids’ bikes.

It was an unexpected twist to the end of an afternoon workshop that was all about leadership and co-operation. Sitting cross-legged on the floor cheering on her teammates, Katy Campbell, dean of the U of A Faculty of Extension, wasn’t sure how helpful she was, but “I’m learning something. I’m trying to find some way to be useful in a team environment.”

And, she added, she hoped the bikes they were cobbling together—for better or worse—would eventually be donated to a good cause.

Little did Campbell or anyone else in the room know how immediately the effects of their work would be felt.

The teams were still at work tightening screws when 24 young-

sters from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Edmonton unexpectedly poured into the room and chattered with delight as they looked over their new gifts. There were gasps of surprise—and some tears of joy—from U of A employees as the children handed homemade thank-you cards to the individual teams who had made their bikes. As they tried on extra gifts of helmets and bounced up and down on their new seats, the children visited with their benefactors and shared their gratitude.

When asked how she felt about her shiny new toy, a shy Akaul

Uguak, eight, said she was “happy,” and then added a soft “thank-you.”

The children’s joy brought home to the group the importance of working together for a common cause and reflecting on how that has an impact on others, which was

the ultimate lesson of the day for the U of A staff.

“My heart lifted when I saw the children come in,” Campbell said. “I was ecstatic.”

The hustle, bustle and stray bicycle parts were all part of a leadership workshop that brought 120 of the University of Alberta’s vice-presidents, deans, department chairs, administrators and front-line supervisors together for an afternoon

of collegial teamwork.

At a deeper level, the event was designed to give everyone a chance to work with others beyond their own faculties and departments, to strengthen campus relationships and to take that wider vision back to their own offices to share, said Victor Shewchuk, senior advisor of Staff Learning and Development.

“This exercise brought our leaders together to build pathways for continued collaboration and collective problem-solving. It helps build a stronger U of A team culture, which in turn builds a stronger sense of shared responsibility and community.”

That, Shewchuk added, is key to helping the university in the goal of becoming one of the best publicly funded universities in the world. “The benefits include shared resources and learning from one another, with the ultimate benefit of moving the entire university towards its vision,” he said.

“One of the main ways of us getting to the top 20 by 2020 is through our people and their ability to work together.”

The afternoon included group exercises that spurred creative thought about who the participants are and what they bring to the U of A, and, through the expressions of delight from the children, to realize how their day-to-day efforts impact others.

“This reminds us that what we do is for the public good,” Campbell said.



Phyllis Clark, vice-president (finance and administration), lends a hand building kids’ bikes on May 6.

Though the nuts-and-bolts project took Imran Mirza well out of his role as a professor of pathology, he was struck by how everyone pulled together as a U of A team to get the work done.

“We might have been intimidated by the challenge individually, but collectively, we knew we could do it.”

“At the end of the day, we are looking at putting 120 points of

light back into the academy to do whatever it is they do, and share this learning,” said Shewchuk. “We are hoping this was a significant emotional experience for the employees here today, and that they understand that they really do contribute to the university.”

“They’ll realize they matter to the U of A, and they’ll tell others that they matter, too.” ■

Exhibit examines authenticity’s deepest meaning

Alexandria Eldridge

As the presence of high-fashion retailers in Edmonton increases, many people are paying more money than ever to get that “real” designer bag. However, some University of Alberta students are asking, “what is real?”

A new exhibit entitled, “The Great Pretenders,” put together by fourth-year human ecology students under the guidance of their professor, Megan Strickfaden, explores ideas of authenticity and material culture.

“Material culture refers to how people have material artifacts—which could be a building, a dress

or a button—and how every artifact that exists reflects the values that are inherent to a particular culture,” said Strickfaden.

As an example, she pointed out that the Christian Dior suit from the exhibit reflects different values than a hand-dyed African blanket.

“[The suit] reflects a consumer culture where look and personal presentation is very important. Dior was all about making women look professional and tidy,” she said. “Whereas an African product is more about being connected to nature [and] how handicrafts are made with, for example, natural dyes.”

Strickfaden said that the exhibit

invites the public to start making these types of interpretations themselves.

“[Viewers] read about authenticity and start to make connections with the objects that are in the exhibit, so it is something that’s mentally challenging as well,” she said. “It’s left open for some interpretation, which just allows viewers to engage on a different level.”

Vanessa Zembal, a student who took the class, thinks that viewers will also engage with the exhibit because the ideas are universal.

“We present a pretty interesting idea that anybody can relate to. If you’ve pierced your ears, worn high heels, bought a knock-off bag or spent the money and bought a real ‘designer’ bag, you’ve experienced issues around authenticity,” she said.

The exhibit contains more than 60 artifacts, with pieces ranging from the late 19th century to the present day. Some of the diverse artifacts include ‘70s platform boots, Inuit packing dolls and an early 20th century corset.

Zembal said that the experience of putting together the exhibit helped her learn many professional skills but was satisfying in other ways as well.

“I thought it was really thought-provoking to look at the objects that are in your house and think about why people collect things. It kind of relates to both your whole professional life afterwards as well as intellectually inspiring you to look at things differently,” she said.

Strickfaden also felt that the stu-



Megan Strickfaden led her ecology students through an exploration of authenticity and material culture, which resulted in “The Great Pretenders” exhibit.

dents in the class looked at things differently after completing the exhibit.

“They thought, at the beginning, that unless something was a designer article, it wasn’t the real thing. And through working on this exhibit, they recognized that the real thing is actually connected to the values and beliefs of the person who owns

the object,” she said. “Authenticity is not about whether it’s designer or whether it’s a knock-off.”

“The Great Pretenders” is on display until June 16 in the south lobby of the Human Ecology building, located at the corner of 89 Ave. and 116 St., and is open to the general public. ■

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Trio of educators concoct winning formula

Michael Brown & Noreen Remtulla

In their eternal search for just the right combination of chemicals as it applies to the task at hand, the Biochemistry Student Services Teaching Group has seemingly stumbled upon a formula for teaching that just might need a patent.

In just one year, the group saw students' ratings of the new and improved introductory class in biochemistry jump up to the 75th percentile this year from the 50th percentile rank it received in 2009.

Professors Rachel Milner, Jonathon Parrish and Adrienne Wright, who were recently awarded with the University of Alberta Teaching Unit Award—an award designed to recognize teaching excellence as a result of the collaboration of instructors—have spent the past five years improving the curriculum and presentation of the 200- and 300-level biochemistry classes. Organized as a teaching unit to bring consistency across every class, the trio says they try to emphasize the preparation of students for the higher-level courses and also get them to truly enjoy learning how the science of biochemistry leads to better medical treatments.

“Teaching is a conversation—you do better when you have people off whom to bounce ideas.”

“You can never be good enough,” said Wright. “We have to listen to the students and keep moving and changing to improve the course.”

“You have to always encourage your students to improve, go further and jump higher.”

Rachel Milner

Parrish agreed, adding the Teaching Unit Award is about the Biochemistry Student Services group working together. “It gives us a new standard to maintain and exceed,” he said.

Milner, who is also this year's recipient of the William Hardy

Alexander Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, which recognizes excellence in undergraduate teaching by academic staff, says learning comes by ways of sharing and conversation.

“Teaching is a conversation—you do better when you have people off whom to bounce ideas.”

Milner adds it is also important to hear oneself from the student's perspective, to get some feedback while teaching and to make sure of effective communication. “I try to let the students know what is expected of them, and help them get there, with encouragement or whatever else is necessary to try and help them to achieve or meet expectations,” said Milner. “I want to make sure the students feel they have someone to talk to them and discuss things with them.”

At the University of Alberta Teaching Awards reception held on May 4 in the Timms Centre for the Arts, Carl Amrhein, provost and vice-president (academic) said the positive impact that excellence in teaching has on everyone is invaluable.

able.

“[Teaching] is hard work. It demands energy, passion and continuing commitment. When it's

done well, teaching instills a zest for learning, which in turn instills a zest for life, a curiosity and a sense of purpose,” said Amrhein. ■



(From l-r) Adrienne Wright, Rachel Milner and Jonathon Parrish are the 2010 recipients of the U of A's Teaching Unit Award.

Changing attitudes about the oil and gas industry

Bev Betkowski

These days, the oil and gas industry's reputation is tarnished by incidents like a Gulf of Mexico oil spill or the Syncrude trial. The industry is questioned by celebrities, politicians and environmentalists alike, but it also has a proud history that needs to be recognized, says a University of Alberta professor.

“While recent environmental disasters should not be downplayed, there is room to recognize Alberta's resource-based heritage, and more importantly, to understand that innovative reclamation projects can go a long way to lightening the footprint left by oil and gas development,” said Anne Naeth, a professor of ecology and land reclamation in the U of A's Department of Renewable Resources.

“We tend to forget the importance of the oil and gas industry in building

our province, as we focus on environmental issues emanating from it,” Naeth added.

To explore the idea of marking that history, Naeth assigned some of her fourth-year students a year-end project that proposes turning a former gas plant in southern Alberta into a historical interpretive centre and a greenhouse for prairie grasses.

The students designed a full reclamation plan for the Turner Valley Gas Plant, which has been declared both a provincial historic resource and a national historic site. The plant, built after gas was discovered in the area by brothers James, John and Robert Turner in 1914, was the first of its kind in Canada, processing natural gas, propane and sulphur. It closed in 1985.

“Sometimes the public may not be aware of the really good reclamation work that can be done to revitalize a site,” said Naeth. “This project is a re-

“We tend to forget the importance of the oil and gas industry in building our province, as we focus on environmental issues emanating from it.”

Anne Naeth

minder of the proud resource heritage Alberta has, along with the potential of imaginative reclamation projects.”

The students, though they worked from their classroom, based their assessment on several engineering studies done at the site over the past 30 years.

Their plan would see contaminants removed from the site and the plant refurbished into an interpretive

centre about the oil and gas industry and its Alberta roots. Included in the concept by the students is a greenhouse to grow rough fescue, a hardy prairie grass that would be planted on site and used in other reclamation projects.

The visitor experience would include a formal tour through the plant following the path that the gas would have taken during processing, picnicking areas, walking paths and an interpretive centre.

The Turner Valley Gas Plant is currently closed to the public due to health hazards still on site, but the government has been working in recent years to remove mercury and sulphur contamination, said Andrew Braid, a fourth-year renewable resources student and leader of the student project.

Though the students have no plans to actively pitch the project to government, research institutions or

industry, all of those parties could viably support such an initiative, he added.

“We've developed a plan that makes sense from a number of perspectives,” he said. “This project is designed to increase awareness about land reclamation in Alberta, which makes it really relevant given the disturbed sites that exist in the province.”

Besides learning how to conduct quality research, Naeth said her students also learned how to be citizens.

“They recognize the role they play in reclamation, which is not only about developing a plan that is biophysically feasible, but also feasible from cultural, economic and social perspectives.”

“They now recognize the need for people with their expertise and ability to take their place in the work world and be citizens with balanced perspectives.” ■

U of A Athletics bids on six CIS championships

Matt Gutsch

University of Alberta Athletics has bid to host six CIS championships over the next five years.

The events Athletics has targeted to host are: women's basketball (2011 and 2013), men's hockey (2013 and 2014) and men's soccer (2013 and 2014).

“We are bidding to host these championships to give our teams the best possible opportunity to compete on the national stage where they would receive support from the U of A student population, as well as their friends and families,” said Vang Ioannides, acting director of Athletics. “At the U of A, we have set a goal to host one CIS championship per year, and we hope that this slate of bids

will help us to achieve that goal.”

The U of A has hosted 34 CIS championships in the past, and will next act as a championship host for the 2012 women's hockey tournament. Evergreen and gold teams have won 12 CIS titles while competing in Edmonton.

The last time Alberta hosted the CIS women's basketball championships was during the 2000 and 2001 seasons, where the host Pandas finished fourth (2000) and second (2001).

“The women's basketball championship is a significant bid, because it will either mark the last CIS championship in the Main Gym (2011), or the first in a new, state of the art facility, the GO Centre (2013),” said Ioannides.

Historic Clare Drake Arena has

served as the location of the University Cup championship tournament eight times, most recently in 2005 and 2006 when the Golden Bears won back-to-back national championships. The 2005 CIS men's hockey championship was played before 10,000 people at Rexall Place.

“If we are awarded men's hockey in the 2013 season, it will correspond with the Golden Bears 100th anniversary, and what better way to celebrate than an opportunity to win on home ice,” said Ioannides.

Alberta is also looking to repeat CIS home championship success with the Golden Bears soccer team by bidding for the 2013 and 2014 national championships. The Golden Bears last hosted the nationals in 2006, winning the gold medal, the program's first championship win in Edmonton. ■

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15 doctoral students land Vanier scholarships

The U of A's 2010 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship recipients

- Danielle Anderson – Development of dosimetry for microbeam radiation therapy at the Canadian Light Source
- Karen Jung – Role of monocyte-macrophage differentiation and activation in radiation-induced fibrosis of breast cancer patients
- Jessie-Lee Langille – Evaluating the impact of public policy on school health promotion in Nova Scotia
- Joaquín López-Orozco – Role of the kinesin Eg5 in dynamics of argonaute complexes
- Moti Paudel – Exploring ways to eliminate metal artifacts in computed tomography (CT) images of cancer patients with metal implants for radiotherapy treatment planning
- David Thompson – Use of normalization process theory to develop a knowledge translation intervention in long-term care
- Andrew Walsh – In vivo quantification of brain iron in multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease
- Lisa Brown – Subsurface transport, fate and characterization of oil sand naphthenic acids in soil and groundwater systems.
- James Ede – Characterizing the biological interactions of helical rosette nanotubes using a zebrafish (*Danio rerio*) cell line.
- Kimberly Ong – In vivo and in vitro evaluation of the biological effects of functionalized nanoparticles
- Steven Oosterhof – Progressive collapse mitigation in steel structures
- Aja Rieger – Evolutionary bridges between innate and adaptive immunity at the level of phagocytosis.
- Qiong Wu – A complete, reliable and cost-effective reflectarray antenna with micro-fabricated elements
- Barbara Milmine – Assessing urban Aboriginal policy: an examination of the Government of Canada's urban Aboriginal strategy, 1997–2012
- Tamara Sorenson Duncan – An examination of non-word repetition tasks in children learning English as a second language

Folio Staff

The University of Alberta is home to 15 recipients of the 2010 Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship, the nation's most prestigious graduate prize.

Vanier scholars receive \$50,000 annually for up to three years, and each was chosen as a result of their demonstrated leadership skills and high standard of scholarly achievement in graduate studies in the social sciences and humanities, natural

sciences and engineering and health research.

"Graduate students are creative, fresh thinkers," said U of A President Indira Samarasekera. "Working at the very cutting edge of their disciplines, they are a vital life force in the academy and a major source of technical and social innovation within society. That's why I am so thrilled to congratulate U of A's Vanier Graduate Scholarship winners and am pleased that these 15 exceptional students are or soon will be part of our community of learning

and discovery."

The Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships program is designed to attract and retain world-class doctoral students by offering them a significant financial award to assist them during their studies at Canadian universities. The program is administered jointly by Canada's three research granting councils: the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. ■

Water law expert says plenty of drops to drink if we're efficient

Jamie Hanlon

Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink. For many observers, this expression applies squarely to Alberta's aquatic resources.

Not so, says the University of Alberta's David Percy, a natural-resource law expert. In fact, he says that we likely have quite a bit of water to spare, we just have to manage it more effectively. Percy, who was in Calgary last week delivering a presentation as part of the U of A's Calgary Centre speakers' series, spoke of the water issues that affect Alberta overall.

Percy notes, however, that there are issues of disparity between the north and south regions of the province, both in resource allocation and conservation management. He says that shortage concerns are greater in the area between Red Deer and the Canada/U.S. border. Because of this, he notes, there have been no new water licenses issued for a number of years. This forces companies and industries to acquire water rights through transfers from holders of existing licences. A recent transfer of water rights between the East Balzac Development Area and the Rocky View municipality leaves Percy quite convinced this plan can work effectively.

"We can accommodate new growth by allowing new users to obtain water from existing licences. There's a lot of water in southern Alberta that is tied up in low-value uses that could be conserved or put to more valuable use," he said. "We've got to allow the transfer of water rights to develop in order to encourage [usage] to happen to make the most with what we have."

In the north, water usage is not restricted, but remains a hot button issue for industry and conservationists alike, especially in the lower Athabasca River near Fort McMurray. Percy notes that water usage for oilsands development is restricted at key points during the year to the "extraordinarily high standard" of having to maintain no less than 85 per cent of the naturally occurring flow of the river. Percy notes that there appears to be a double standard between the northern and southern parts of the province.

"In the South Saskatchewan River basin, the target is 45 per cent, but we don't achieve that target,"



David Percy, professor in the Faculty of Law, delivers a talk on water management in Calgary last week.

said Percy. "Eighty five per cent suggests a very high level of environmental protection—and it's hard to argue with that—but I think a lot of people are asking whether that figure is unduly protective."

Another challenge, Percy notes, is one that has remained unaddressed for over 100 years. Aboriginal water rights are the "sleeping giants of western Canadian water law" he says, and the giants are starting to stir from their slumber. Percy notes that many of the original treaties signed with First Nations groups did not cover water rights, but that there are "veiled references" within the treaties. However, he says, new developments in this area, including around

the duty to consult, are moving it, albeit slowly, into a position where governments may have to take definitive action to reconcile the issue.

"There's been litigation surrounding the area of Aboriginal water rights, but there's been nothing definitive dealing with them," he said. "This sleeping giant is being poked awake 116 years after our first legislation on the subject."

Percy holds fast to his belief that it is management and stewardship of this precious natural resources that is the key issue, not quantity or availability. Effective allocation of water, and legislation that serves to properly manage it, are the keys to ensuring that conservation and economic growth can co-exist without one being a detriment to the other.

"Alberta doesn't have a serious water shortage by any means. We can make far more efficient use of the water we have," Percy said. "We have to make sure that our legislation works and set up the correct incentives to require efficient water use."

"If we do that, then we are reasonably secure for the foreseeable future." ■

Librarian student heading to Washington

Dawn Ford

Bianna Erban, graduate student in the School of Library and Information Studies' master of library and information studies program, is heading to Washington's Smithsonian Institute to intern at the Cultural Resources Center of the National Museum of the American Indians. "I feel incredibly fortunate to be involved in a field that holds the potential to improve the quality of people's lives tangibly, and I am grateful to the committed faculty for encouraging me to pursue my passion for social responsibility," says Erban who will spend her internship expanding upon her existing research interests.

"While at the U of A, I have focused the majority of my research on overcoming barriers to information access, including work on the impact of public library policies on homeless individuals, meeting the information needs of temporary foreign workers in Alberta and the accessibility and ownership of First Nations archival resources in Canada."

A volunteer at community events and agencies such as Homeless Connect and the Boyle Street Community Services Centre, Erban says it is principle that first drew her to her future career.

"I have been being increasingly drawn to a career in librarianship be-



Bianna Erban is heading to Washington's Smithsonian Institute.

cause of the principles it encompasses, including equitable access to services, social inclusion, intellectual freedom and the promotion of lifelong learning," says Erban who for the last two years has served as co-chair and blog master of the Future Librarians for Intellectual Freedom student group at the School of Library and Information Studies.

Erban, who also completed undergraduate and graduate programs in English literature at the U of A, is a recent recipient of a U of A libraries award. She will be graduating from the program in November. "I look forward to bringing back the insights, experiences and knowledge I gain from the internship in Washington, D.C. to Alberta." ■

NASA elective helps med student reach for the stars

Quinn Phillips

University of Alberta medical student Michael Gallagher is hoping an elective at the Kennedy Space Center will help launch his medical career.

The fourth-year student in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry was the only Canadian and one of just three people selected for the aerospace medicine clerkship with the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

"I think it was one of the best months I've ever had," said Gallagher. "Going on this elective was an opportunity to fulfil a childhood dream and be part of an organization that gave rise to one of humankind's great achievements."

The clerkship is offered only twice a year, in April and October, and accepts up to four students each time. Any fourth-year medical student can apply. Although the program is offered through NASA, the Canadian Space Agency funded Gallagher's trip south.

Gallagher's trip was timed perfectly. He arrived the day the shuttle Discovery was set to head to space and got to see it blast off.

"It was apparently one of the best launches a lot of people had seen," said Gallagher, who was also there



Michael Gallagher (inset) was one of just three people selected for the aerospace medicine clerkship with NASA.

when it came back to Earth and land at Kennedy Space Center. He was part of the triage medical team on the ground and got to sit in on the medical team's debrief following the landing.

In between the excitement, he took part in lectures by NASA medical team members about the different challenges in space flight, and what the response would be if the shuttle had an emergency. They

also developed hypotheses for a number of research topics involved with aerospace medicine.

"I think it was a tremendous help in my education," said Gallagher. "Some of the things I got to learn,

for example, were how to plan a large medical operation for when the shuttle lands and how to create an emergency contingency plan."

"We always encourage our students to explore opportunities of leadership and areas of interest that they're passionate about," said Fraser Brenneis, vice-dean of education for the faculty. "We want them to look at and think about other concepts and other ways of doing things in the medical field."

Gallagher will now move on to do his residency in rural family medicine in Medicine Hat. He says this experience will help him think outside the box.

"One of the great things about the space program is it's really about pushing the frontiers of human understanding, and when you do a lot of that you learn so many new things you can bring back to certain problems on Earth."

"I think it was one of the best months I've ever had."

Michael Gallagher

Trudeau scholarship opens opportune doors

Jamie Hanlon

You can forgive Libe Garcia-Zarranz for not being totally familiar with Pierre Trudeau or his legacy in Canadian politics. The Spanish graduate student, who is completing the second year of her PhD in the department of English and Film Studies, had likely never heard of Canada's 15th prime minister before she came to Edmonton.

But she now has good reason to admire his work and his values. Garcia-Zarranz has been awarded \$180,000 as one of the 15 Trudeau Foundation Scholarship winners. The foundation was established in 2002 as a living



Libe Garcia-Zarranz

memorial to the late prime minister.

The prize, which is awarded annually to support doctoral candidates pursuing research of compelling present-day concern and touching upon one or more of the foundation's themes (human rights and dignity, responsible citizenship, Canada and the world, and people in their natural environment) is awarded to "highly gifted individuals who are actively engaged in their fields and expected to become leading national and international figures," according to the foundation's website.

Garcia-Zarranz, who is the sixth University of Alberta graduate student to be chosen for the scholarship since its inception in

2002, is still somewhat in euphoric shock of having been chosen as a recipient. This scholarship, she says, will allow her to expand and develop her research in ways that she would never have imagined. Part of the monies that she will receive over the three years for which she will be funded can be used as a discretionary fund to enhance her field of study.

"You can create your own conferences, you can take a course anywhere, you can attend conferences," said Garcia-Zarranz, whose area of specialization is contemporary cross-border Canadian women writers.

"I want to learn French," she says. "The foundation is very big on French; they love it."

Learning Canada's other official language comes in handy, too, since some of the women writers that she is studying are francophone. Thus, another plan running through her

mind right now is to use the scholarship to meet with the authors she is researching and discuss their works in person, perhaps hosting a conference and inviting the authors to present on their works. Garcia-Zarranz now is left with a host of options to choose from. And it's a little dazzling, she finds.

"It's overwhelming, I'm very happy, but somehow it doesn't seem very real," said Garcia-Zarranz. "This country is treating me very well."

Aside from the opportunities that the scholarship presents, she is excited by the fellowship that being a Trudeau scholar brings. Garcia-Zarranz mentions that there are two previous recipients in her department and they have already been talking about collaborating on a project that would reflect upon and credit the foundation's gift.

She is also looking forward to

meeting with her fellow scholarship recipients at a conference in Saskatoon later this month. Garcia-Zarranz notes that she is excited by the opportunity to network with foundation members and the other 14 scholars from across Canada.

Between now and the fall, she is taking time to figure out what she is going to do with this new aspect of her academic career. She talks of planning how to establish new priorities and new components of her research, including activism, which she says is an important part of the scholarship.

Metaphorically, notes Garcia-Zarranz, doors keep opening in front of her. And she is now poised to walk through and explore the possibilities of what awaits her on the other side.

"I want to think big," she said. "They're giving me this chance to do things for the first time in my life. I want to make the most of it."

Student engineers business solutions in Africa

Richard Cairney

When Lucas Maidens enrolled in the Faculty of Engineering two years ago, he had no idea his education would take him to Africa.

But Maidens—who is entering his third year of the mechanical engineering department's biomedical option program—left at the beginning of the month for Malawi as part of a four-month junior fellowship with the U of A chapter of Engineers Without Borders. He'll be part of a team helping agricultural entrepreneurs run their businesses smoothly.

"I had always done community service work with a church youth group but that stopped after high school," Maidens said, adding that, during his first year of engineering, the EWB chapter caught his attention because of its commitment to development issues locally and globally.

"I missed doing that sort of stuff so when I started my second year I started helping out with some of their events, and I thought the Junior Fellowship program looked like a good opportunity to go out and do something big."

For his placement, Maidens will be working with the Rural Market

Development Trust, which is affiliated with an American non-governmental organization called Citizen's Network for Foreign Affairs. He'll be working and living with an "agro dealer" who sells seeds and fertilizers to farmers and advises them on their use.

During this portion of the exchange, he'll use his computer and bookkeeping skills to help local agro dealers sharpen their business skills. He'll also collect data on what is working well for the agro dealers and where they could use more help.

The second part of his exchange will see Maidens in a city office, work-

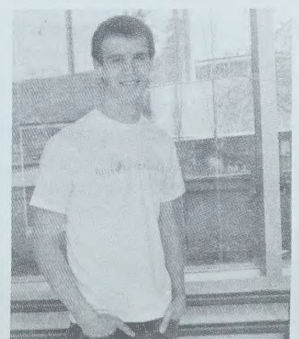
ing toward solutions for any challenges the agro dealers are dealing with.

So, where is the engineering in the exchange?

"EWB knows that sometimes technology isn't the obstacle that people face," Maidens said. "And I don't think I'll be using my calculus courses while I'm there but the communications stuff we do will come in handy, and so will the problem-solving approaches: looking at a situations, the resources available and figuring out how to produce the best outcome."

Maidens returns to Edmonton Aug. 29, leaving him just enough time

to catch his breath and then jump into his third year of studies.



Lucas Maidens

Perceptions about traffic density linked to increased BMI: study

Jane Hurly

People living in neighbourhoods where they perceived that traffic made walking unpleasant were more likely to have a higher body mass index than those who didn't, says a new study looking at the relationship between the built environment, socio-economic status and changes in body mass index over a six year period.

This was one of the surprise findings in the study, led by Tanya Berry, a professor in behavioural medicine and a population health expert in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation.

"We found that the more people perceived that traffic was a problem in their neighbourhood, the more likely they were to have a higher BMI," says Berry.

Study results also showed that participants living in the lowest socio-economic status neighbourhoods experienced higher BMI increases than those in high SES neighbourhoods. Age was also a factor in the study's results.

"We found that younger people had the bigger increases in BMI than older people, meaning those in the over-65 group," says Berry. "That's bad news on both counts: it means younger people are getting fatter and older people may be vulnerable to frailty and illness because of the low BMI. It is also an indicator of

cardiovascular disease," she said.

This study surveyed 822 Edmontonians by phone and included questions about age, gender, education, employment, marital status and household annual income, and whether they had moved since 2002. Participants were asked about their consumption of fruits and vegetables, how often they ate them and how many servings and whether they were smokers. Those in the study were asked to self report their

"We found that the more people perceived traffic was a problem in their neighbourhood, the more likely they were to have a higher BMI."

Tanya Berry

height and weight so researchers could calculate their BMI, and how many minutes they spent walking, sitting or sleeping over a seven-day period.

"We asked about the type of housing in their neighbourhoods," says Berry, "because single family, detached family dwellings tend to reduce walkability, whereas in high-density, mixed residential neighbourhoods people can walk out of their apartment, go to the

grocery store or other places easy to walk to."

In neighbourhood design, says Berry, there are the three D's of walkability: diversity, density and design. "And then there are people's perceptions," says Berry. "Low-income neighbourhoods would rank quite high on the walkability index, but people aren't walking because of perceived safety issues, or the only place to go is the convenience store on the corner."

Finally, says Berry, "I was surprised to find that objective walkability (an index assessing density, diversity and design) didn't come up as significant at all in our findings. There's a body of cross-sectional literature showing the relationship between the walkability of a neighbourhood and BMI, but there are some other studies, and now this longitudinal one, that actually looks at the change in BMI and are calling that relationship into question."

"It might be that the perception of walkability is more important than these objective measures."

Going forward, says Berry, "We really need to pay attention to people in the lower income neighbourhoods and what we can do to help them; work with their community leagues, listen to, and understand their perceptions and what they value."

Berry's research was published in the *International Journal of Obesity*. ■

University mourns death of champion for persons with disabilities

Michael Brown

The University of Alberta is mourning the loss of a true champion who used his keen mind and disarming charm to overcome severe physical limitations and help carry the university to the forefront of advocacy for the disabled. Gary McPherson, executive director of the Canadian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship in the Alberta School of Business and guiding light with the The Steadward Centre, died on May 8. He was 63.

Born in Edson in 1947, McPherson contracted polio when he was nine years old, leaving him a quadriplegic. For more than 30 years, McPherson required institutionalized care. Over the years, McPherson taught himself a technique he called "frog breathing," which allowed him to breathe without the use of a daytime respirator. He also regained partial use of his left hand and leg. At the age of 43, McPherson left the hospital for good.

In 1998, McPherson joined the staff at the U of A as the executive director of the Alberta School of Business' Canadian Centre for Social Entrepreneurship—a centre with the aim of building on the foundations necessary to encourage entrepreneurial approaches to social innovation.

Mike Percy, dean of the Alberta School of Business, remembers his good friend as a great role model and colleague.

"Gary McPherson was one of the most courageous and interesting people I have ever met," said Percy. "He overcame every hardship while maintaining a positive outlook throughout his life and an intellectual curiosity to the end."

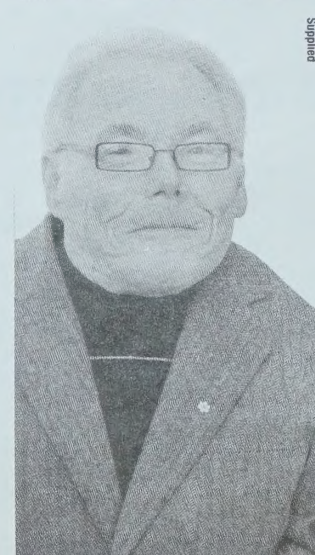
An avid sports enthusiast, McPherson advocated tirelessly for athletes with disabilities. McPherson, who occasionally lectured in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, spent more than 20 years in wheelchair sports administration, eight of which he served a president of the Canadian Wheelchair Sports Association. He had served as president of the Edmonton Paralympic Association and, until his death, president and chair of The Steadward Centre—the U of A's pioneering fitness, lifestyle and research facility, serving people with disability.

In acknowledgment of his extraordinary work, McPherson earned considerable recognition and several awards, including being an inductee in both the Edmonton and Alberta sports hall of fame, and was named to the Order of Canada. In 1995, the U of A conferred upon him an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree.

In 2001, McPherson wrote and published *With Every Breath I Take*, a book of humour, anecdotes and "practical suggestions on how we can care for ourselves." The non-fiction hit found an instant place on the Edmonton bestseller charts and remained there for many weeks.

With his drive, wisdom and vision of the endless possibilities available for people with disabilities, McPherson, who leaves behind a wife and two children, took a run at the premier's job in 2006, a race eventually won by Ed Stelmach.

Bob Steadward, founder of the Steadward Centre, said of his long-time friend, "[Gary] pushed the University of Alberta and many communities into recognizing and understanding the needs and desires of persons with disabilities. Although he lived in an institutional environment for 34 years, his ideals and visions relate to each one of us." ■



Gary McPherson died on May 8 at the age of 63.

news [shorts]

folio presents a sample of some of the research stories that recently appeared on ExpressNews, the U of A's online news source, and other campus news sources. To read more, go to www.expressnews.ualberta.ca.

Grade 8 students get an in-depth look at an arts education

The fourth annual Liberal Arts Day at the University of Alberta, hosted by the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research on April 30, showcased the liberal arts as a viable and relevant option of study. On that day, more than 350 Grade 8 students from eight local Edmonton schools discovered that the liberal arts can equip them with creativity, leadership and problem-solving skills.

The students who took part in the event explored areas of research from anthropology to philosophy and did everything from lighting up a mock stage for Rush's "Spirit of radio," to determining objects as artifacts.

Anthropology PhD student Katie Biittner, a veteran Liberal Arts Day presenter, says the student interaction and participation is great, noting that students experience the relevance of liberal arts and their application to society. Relating with this teen audience, she says, is the key to awakening their interest.

"This event is about getting these students to know there's more out there in terms of an arts education—especially in terms of anthropology, philosophy, sociology and psychology—than just the classical arts disciplines," said Biittner. "These subjects aren't necessarily things students might think of as career options, even in high school, so if we can get them thinking about it in Grade 8, all the better."

Paper on scholarship of teaching and learning named education journal's best article

Laura Servage, a PhD student in educational policy studies, has recently been acknowledged by the Canadian Journal of Higher Education for the best article of 2009.

In the article, she focuses on the concept of the scholarship of teaching and learning. In particular, Servage argues that there are complacencies and pitfalls that can occur when educational concepts become widely embraced and thus entrenched into our learning systems. "As soon as an idea gains wide currency, people quit thinking critically about it," she says.

Servage describes how the scholarship of teaching and learning was introduced through the work of Ernest Boyer in 1990, and has since contributed to a growing interest in improving post-secondary teaching through scholarship. "I'm not opposed to this; who could be against better teaching," says Servage. "But somewhere along the way, the 'scholarship of teaching' morphed into 'the scholarship of teaching and learning.' I just wondered, 'What's with the student learning push?'"

Servage admits that the answer appears obvious: learning is good. But she argues introducing "learning" into the scholarship of teaching equation has contributed to perceptions of learning as an outcome, instead of a process. When learning is reduced to "measurable outcomes" and "objectives," she says learners and scholars learn to objectify themselves.

"There's definitely a place for this kind of learning," says Servage, "It's productive. And I want competent doctors, teachers and engineers as much as the next person. But I believe that if we equate learning with outcomes alone, we lose its most powerful, and frankly, its most beautiful dimensions" says Servage. "It's about the wondering; it's about the surprises."

A closer look at anesthetic earns research award

Fifth-year anesthesiology resident Ferrante Gragasins won a prestigious research award from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada last month for his work on the anesthetic drug propofol.

The substance that became a household name when it made headlines as one of the drugs that allegedly killed pop music legend Michael Jackson. Gragasins' research compared the effects of the popular anesthetic on the blood vessels in young and old non-human models. Gragasins' findings showed that propofol relaxes the vessels in older patients more than those of younger patients and could help anesthesiologists better manage propofol in aging populations.

The anesthesiology resident's research gained international attention when it was published in the July 2009 edition of the *American Journal of Physiology*.

"It really helps me believe that this research is appreciated and relevant," said Gragasins, who wraps up his five-year residency in just a few weeks. ■

folio
UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

on the Web
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talks & events

Talks and Events listings do not accept submissions via fax, mail, e-mail or phone. Please enter events you'd like to appear in folio and on ExpressNews at: www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/events/submit.cfm. A more comprehensive list of events is available online at www.events.ualberta.ca. Deadline: noon one week prior to publication. Entries will be edited for style and length.

Until June 13

The Great Pretenders. This exhibit, subtitled "Questioning the Meaning of Authenticity," aims to expand the meaning of authenticity, to move beyond the dichotomous labels of real versus fake. The exhibit designed for guests to explore what is real is located in the south lobby of the Human Ecology building.

May 25 & 26

Boom and Bust Again: Policy Challenges for a Commodity-Based Economy. This conference explores a wide range of issues associated with this historical phenomenon: economic diversification strategies; savings policies; energy and the environment and the challenges faced by government policy-makers. This conference will be of interest to politicians, government officials, business leaders, faculty and students. For more information or to

register, go to www.economics.ualberta.ca/boom_and_bust_again.cfm.

May 26

Kristie Saumure – Research Colloquium. "Motivation and the Information Behaviours of Online Learning Students: The Case of a Professionally-Oriented, Graduate Program." Noon–1 p.m. 2-09 Rutherford South.

May 27 & 28

Canada's and Europe's Northern Dimensions. An international seminar on the "Geopolitical and legal aspects of Canada's and Europe's Northern Dimensions," which brings together policy makers, researchers and stakeholders to discuss trends in policy, share their experiences, and offer their perspectives on the future challenges facing the northern regions of Europe and Canada. 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Maple

Leaf Room Lister Centre.

May 27

Research Administration Day 2010. Research Administration Day is designed for administrators who are involved with research administration and management at the faculty, department and project level. Eleven sessions will be provided. For more information or to register, go to rsoregistration.ualberta.ca/coursecalendar.doc.

June 4

Does the Built Environment Influence Health? Challenging the Influence of the Built Environment on Sedentary Living. A half-day forum featuring a presentation by Tish Doyle-Baker, a professor at the University of Calgary, in both the Faculty of Kinesiology and Environmental Design. 8:30 a.m.–noon, Maple Leaf Room Lister Centre.

Spring Convocation Ceremonies May 30–June 10

May 30

2:30 p.m. Augustana Faculty

June 2

3 p.m. Science (honours and specialization degrees only)
Allan Wachowich, Honorary Doctor of Laws

June 3

10 a.m. Science (general degree only)
3 p.m. Engineering
Victor Buffalo, Honorary Doctor of Laws
Fred Roots, Honorary Doctor of Science

June 4

10 a.m. Medicine and Dentistry; Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences
3 p.m. Extension.
Aubrey Tingle, Honorary Doctor of Science

June 7

3 p.m. Education (elementary degrees)
Kay Raseroka, Honorary Doctor of Laws

June 8

10 a.m. Education (secondary and adult education degrees and diplomas in education); Physical Education and Recreation
3 p.m. Nursing; Campus Saint-Jean
Hugh Anson-Cartwright, Honorary Doctor of Laws
Brewster Kahle, Honorary Doctor of Laws
James Neal, Honorary Doctor of Laws

June 9

10 a.m. Law; Arts (Departments beginning with A to K)
3 p.m. Arts (Departments beginning with L to Z); Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences
Albert Bandura, Honorary Doctor of Laws
Romila Thapar, Honorary Doctor of Laws

June 10

3 p.m. Graduate Studies and Research (master's degrees and postgraduate diplomas only); Rehabilitation Medicine (master's degrees only); School of Public Health (master's degrees only); Native Studies
Angela Cheng, Honorary Doctor of Laws
Patrick Daniel, Honorary Doctor of Laws

classified ads

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Landscape with no escape



From June 3 to July 3, the University of Alberta Museums present "human/nature: landscapes real and imagined" at the TELUS Centre. (Painting: Lawren S. Harris (1885-1970), "Robertson Bay, Greenland," ca. 1930, oil on wood panel.)

laurels

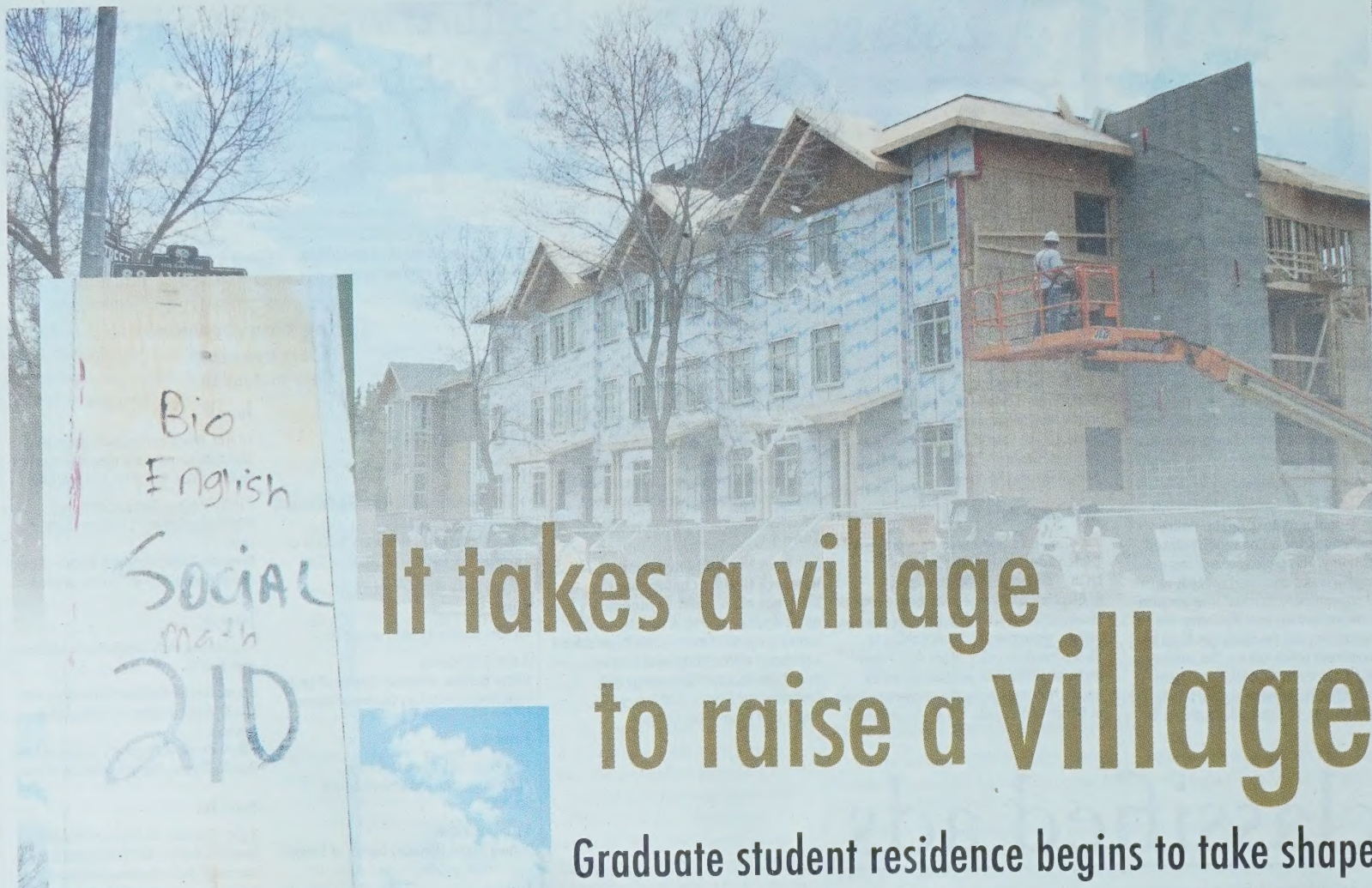
David Schindler, professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, was selected as the recipient of the Edward T. LaRoe III Memorial Award by the Society for Conservation Biology, in recognition of his contributions to research on aquatic ecosystems, biogeochemistry, water security and climate change. The award recognizes the innovative application of science to resource management and policy by scientists.

Derrick Clive, professor in the Department of Chemistry, received the R. U. Lemieux Award from the Canadian Society for Chemistry. This award is presented to an organic chemist who has made a distinguished contribution to any

area of organic chemistry and who is currently working in Canada.

Christian Schlegel, professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, was elected as a fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Canada. The IEEE Canada is an international organization for the advancement of technology related to electricity.

Norman Beaulieu, professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, received the Reginald Aubrey Fessenden Silver Medal for outstanding contributions in wireless communication theory from the IEEE Canada.



It takes a village to raise a village

Graduate student residence begins to take shape

In the summer of 2009, the University of Alberta's Residence Services began construction on a new graduate student residence in East Campus Village. The new residences, located on the corner of 110 St. and 87 Ave., are scheduled to open in the fall of 2010 and will provide 232 beds for graduate students. ■



the
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